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EDUCATION WEEK

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Lawrenceville Set To Launch Drive For $125 Million

Increasing Salaries Is Key Goal of Campaign

By Millicent Lawton

The Lawrenceville School in New Jersey was scheduled this week to announce a five-year, $125-million capital campaign that officials believe would be the largest fund-raising drive conducted to date by an independent school.

The school, a nationally prominent co-educational boarding and day institution for grades 8 through 12 near Princeton and Trenton, plans to use more than 40 percent of the proceeds from the drive, or $51.3 million, to "increase sharply" faculty salaries and benefits, school officials said.

Administrators said their goal is to have the best-paid teachers of any independent school in the United States.

The decision to focus fund-raising on boosting teacher pay was in part market-driven and in part "moral," Josiah Bunting 3rd, Lawrenceville's head master, said last week.

In recent years public-school districts around Lawrenceville and elsewhere in New Jersey have raised salaries sharply, he said, noting that this fall a beginning teacher will make more than $29,000 in Lawrence Township.

Until the increased scrutiny nationwide on teacher pay, Mr. Bunting said, Lawrenceville and similar college-preparatory schools have for years "been able to balance their budgets and deliver a wonderful kind of education because of the good will and selflessness" of their teachers.

But now, he said, "there was a very clear sense that the people that we employ deserve much better of us than we had been able to give them."

"It's just not right," Mr. Bunting added, "to balance a budget on the backs of people that work as hard as these people do"—by, for example, teaching three or four courses,

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Karen Diegmueller

Gov. Lawton Chiles is staking much of the political prestige he has built up over two decades on the campaign for a tax increase.

Fla. Officials Are Barnstorming State To Whip Up Support for Tax Increase

By Karen Diegmueller

TALLAHASSEE, FLA.—For the kickoff rally for an unprecedented state campaign, the symbol that confronts the audience here seems somewhat ominous—a "doomsday" clock, its hands bent, its numbers askew.

Also behind the podium at the Civic Center meeting this month is a green and white banner demanding, "Everyone Should Pay A Fair Share for Florida's Future."

The first to speak is Lieut. Gov. Buddy MacKay, who warns the crowd that time is running out and that the state cannot wait any longer for the legislature to act of its own volition. Instead, he says, the assembled educators, government officials, and activists will have to go straight to the people with their message that taxes must be raised to pay for adequate state services.

A parade of state cabinet members, including the commissioner of education, the secretary of state, and the attorney general, follows with similar exhortations.

When the lieutenant governor returns to the microphone, he tells the audience about his teenage son, who, Mr. MacKay says, is bright but does not yet know who he is or what he wants to be.

"The issue facing Florida today is the same issue facing my 16-year-old son," says Mr. MacKay. "That is maturity."

Indeed, Mr. MacKay and other members of the administration of Gov. Lawton Chiles see their proposal for a $1.35-billion first-year tax increase, $600 million of which would go to education, as a turning point in the history of the Sunshine State. Given the expected resistance in the legislature, which begins a special session on the issue next week, Governor Chiles and his allies see their only hope in an intensive campaign to mobilize voter support.

With the backing of education, health-care, environmental, corrections, and so-

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Fueled by Sense of Crisis, Coalition Forges Plan To Rebuild L.A. Schools

By Ann Bradley

Members of a broad-based coalition of business, labor, school-district, civic, and community leaders are hashing out a plan to restructure the deeply troubled Los Angeles Unified School District.

The effort by the Los Angeles Educational Alliance for Restructuring Now, known as LEARN, is no less ambitious than the 1988 legislation in Illinois that overhauled the governance of the Chicago public schools, its proponents say.

The initiative is fueled by a sense of crisis stemming from a number of factors, chief among them the school district's continuing financial shortfalls. In the past three years, it has been forced to cut a total of more than $800 million from its budget, and it is facing a deficit of $600 million for next year.

Potentially complicating these budget problems is a proposed state ballot initiative to establish a system of state-financed vouchers that could be used at any public or private school. If the proposal qualifies for the ballot and is approved by voters in November, it would harm the the public schools by siphoning off additional money, critics of the measure say. *(See Education Week, May 6, 1992.)*

The recent Los Angeles riots, meanwhile, have underscored the city's social ills and the need to revitalize the public schools, according to Mike Roos, the president and chief executive officer of LEARN.

When LEARN was organized last year, Mr. Roos said, members realized that the city

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House's Bill Would Authorize Standards, But Not Assessment

By Julie A. Miller

WASHINGTON—Provoking a veto threat from Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander, the House Education and Labor Committee last week approved legislation to authorize the development of national subject-matter standards, but not the creation of a national testing system.

The measure would also permit only research on assessments and mandate the development of "school-delivery standards" that would measure school resources and performance.

With its vote, the panel rejected the Bush Administration's America 2000 education strategy, which maintains only a faint presence in the legislation.

The bulk of HR 4323, the "neighborhood schools improvement act," would authorize $700 million in grants to states and school districts to develop and implement reform plans. The plans, to be drafted by committees representing a broad range of "stakeholders," could include a wide variety of education initiatives.

The bill would also reconfigure the National Education Goals Panel and authorize

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Community Fights To Save Denver School That 'Redirects' Dropouts

By Robert Rothman

DENVER—As an over-age junior-high-school student slated to attend North High School here, Sergio Rubio was, he recalled last week, "in the process of dropping out."

Now, four years later, Mr. Rubio is about to receive a high-school diploma. He is one of 68 students scheduled next month to be the first class to graduate from High School Redirection, an alternative school here aimed at those at risk of dropping out. He would like to return to the school as a teacher some day.

To achieve that desire, though, Mr. Rubio will first have to do battle with the Denver school board. Charging that the four-year-old program has failed to provide evidence that its students are meeting the district's curricular goals, the board has voted to close it next month.

The success of Mr. Rubio and others like him, however, has emboldened the school's staff and community to fight to save High School Redirection. They vow to explore every option—including,

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Michael Lewis

Amie MacKenzie, right, a teacher at High School Redirection, helps a student, Lakenya Boyd, with her graduation project.

Also in the news

5 **Big Apple Windfall?**
New York City's Mayor and school officials are at odds over how to spend a $200-million state-agency surplus.

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Seattle To End Busing
The Seattle school board voted this month to begin phasing out the district's mandatory busing program in favor of magnet schools and more choice.
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NASBE Networking
The National Association of State Boards of Education has begun a network to help states launch early-childhood-education initiatives and improve their current efforts.
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Something Old, Something New
A small, affluent Connecticut district is inviting senior citizens into its classrooms to help bridge the gap between young and old and to build support for the schools.
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Mainstreaming and Success
A new study suggests that severely disabled students' degree of success in school may be directly correlated with the amount of time they spend in regular classrooms. **Page 8.**

Stemming Substance Abuse
A new subtance-abuse research center at Columbia University plans efforts to stem drug abuse among at-risk adolescents and to train teachers to identify signs of substance abuse. **Page 8.**

Arizona Impasse
A package of measures designed to revamp the Arizona public-school system appears to be headed for oblivion as a divided legislature bickers over how to resolve a state budget crisis. **Page 12.**

Targeting Gangs
A House committee has approved legislation reauthorizing the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, including new funds to fight gang activity.
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ACROSS THE NATION

NATIONAL

School Construction Continues To Boom, Annual Survey Finds

The school-construction industry continued to boom in 1991, with educational institutions spending a record $17 billion on construction, according to an annual survey conducted by *American School & University* magazine.

Over all, spending on education construction in 1991 was up 13.7 percent over the year before, the survey found.

School districts spent $10.7 billion, a 10.7 percent increase over the previous year; $4.2 billion went for new schools, $3.6 billion for additions to existing structures, and $2.9 billion for renovations.

Two-year colleges spent $1.37 billion, an 18 percent increase over 1990 levels, and four-year colleges spent $4.9 billion, an increase of nearly 20 percent over 1990.

The magazine noted that 1990 had been considered something of an off year for school construction, with a modest 6 percent increase in spending over 1989. The latest increases in spending appeared to alleviate fears that the industry was slowing down after seven years of generally rapid growth.

The magazine said school-construction spending levels appeared last year to withstand recessionary pressures because many of last year's projects had been planned and financed during the stronger economy of the 1980's, and because many schools had to be built, regardless of the costs, to accommodate growing enrollments.

The Southeast continued to account for the largest share of education construction, with almost a quarter of the nation's education-construction dollar being spent there.

■ **The constitutional-liberties group People for the American Way and Time-Warner Inc. have joined forces to launch a new mentoring program to promote racial tolerance among youths in the Los Angeles area** in the wake of this month's civil unrest following the verdict in the Rodney King case.

"We need to act now to address the racial tensions resulting from the Los Angeles violence and rebuild the spirit of community," said Arthur J. Kropp, the president of People for the American Way.

Under a $100,000 grant from the media giant, the program will use students from a number of colleges and universities, including Claremont College, the University of California at Los Angeles, and the University of Southern California, to lead discussions about racial tolerance in high-school classrooms.

Individual schools in the district have not yet been chosen for the program, a spokesman for the organization said.

The Racial Tolerance Mentoring Project is an expansion of a pilot program used in North Carolina for the past two years. ■

STATES

Missing Vermont Funds Caused By Mismanagement, Audit Finds

A shortfall of nearly half a million dollars in the Vermont Department of Education's budget stemmed from mismanagement of funds over the past four fiscal years, not illegal activity, an independent audit has concluded.

The report, ordered by the state finance commissioner in March, revealed $476,511 in unaccounted-for funds. For example, the audit found that the department overspent by $235,000 the amount granted by the federal goverment. The department also underrequested reimbursement under the federal Job Training Partnership Act program by $190,000.

Finance Commissioner Douglas Wacek blamed the losses on poor accounting, including inadequate recordkeeping and double-charging different programs for the same administrative costs. He also noted a breakdown in communication between the accounting department and the jobs-program managers as a factor in the losses.

Among the recommendations of the audit were stronger budgetary controls to avoid overspending, formalization of grant processing, improved staff training and supervision, and maintenance of better records.

In a statement released this month, Commissioner of Education Richard P. Mills noted that an internal personnel investigation linked to the missing funds, which was halted during the audit, would be completed early next month.

■ **The Georgia Board of Education has endorsed a major revamping of its "no pass, no play" rule to allow students with poor grades to participate in after-school activities other than competitive ones.**

Under the new rule, students in grades 6 to 12 who do not pass five courses in the most recent grading period can belong to school clubs and other activities that do not include interschool competition.

Students who fail to meet the standard will still be barred from interscholastic athletics.

Critics of the old policy said it was punitive, and state legislators responded this year with a bill that would have repealed the policy except for competitive events. Gov. Zell Miller vetoed that bill, saying the matter should be decided by the state board.

It is unclear where debate-club meets and school-band competitions fall under the policy.

■ **A New York State parent has won a victory in a federal lawsuit filed to challenge state rules governing the selection of hearing officers to settle special-education disputes between school districts and parents.**

In his lawsuit against the state education department, Edward Heldman, whose son is disabled, contends that the state's system is illegal because it allows local school boards to choose the officers. He said the officers, who usually are lawyers, may be biased in their deliberations because they may have a financial interest in doing business with the school district.

Mr. Heldman's lawsuit had been thrown out by a federal district judge earlier this year, in part because the judge said the boy's father had not first exhausted the state's administrative system for resolving special-education disputes.

But the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit last month ruled that Mr. Heldman could bypass that system because it would be "futile" for him to continue. The court noted that the state's administrative-level hearing process was bound by the same rules Mr. Heldman was challenging.

The appeals court sent the case back to the district court for further consideration. ■

DISTRICTS

Hiring of Escaped Killer Prompts Stricter Background-Check Process

School officials in Fairfax County, Va., have changed their procedures for running criminal-record checks on substitute teachers after discovering that a convicted killer who had escaped from prison had been working in the school system for almost two months.

Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation arrested John Garris, who had been serving a 45-year sentence for murder and robbery in Baltimore when he escaped last June, in a county middle-school science class this month after a fingerprint check revealed his criminal history.

Mr. Garris had applied for the position under his real name and submitted a college transcript.

Until the incident involving Mr. Garris, qualified substitute teachers were allowed to teach while the Virginia State Police and the F.B.I. completed background checks, which could take as long as 10 weeks. Under the district's new procedures, no one will be allowed to teach until a background check is complete.

The Fairfax County schools employ about 500 substitutes a day.

A Presidential School

In Plains, Ga., the hometown of Jimmy Carter, officials are busy converting the former President's old school into the visitors' center of the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site.

Visitors to the center at the now-unused Plains School can view exhibits and films about Mr. Carter and the community he lives in. The center's purpose is not only to tell the story of Jimmy Carter, "but also to tell the story of Plains as a typical rural community," said Fred Boyles, the superintendent of the site.

The school was closed in 1979 during a consolidation of local school programs.

The center will also house an unusual education program. Though still in the early stages of development, officials plan on having a full-time teacher on site to provide classes for visiting school groups. The teacher will integrate the center's themes of science, agriculture, education, civil rights, government, history, and the electoral process into the regular Georgia curriculum, according to Mr. Boyles.

The $3-million site, operated by the National Park Service, will also include Mr. Carter's current and childhood homes and the train depot used as a stop in Mr. Carter's Presidential campaigns.

Mr. Boyles expects the site to once again attract the attention of tourists.

"In the summer of 1976, literally thousands were flocking to this tiny little town to see where he was coming from," said Mr. Boyles. —L.D.

David W. Harple

Left, "I'm enjoying it to the nth degree," says Sister M. Andrina Logan, right, of her return to the classroom at Wilton (Conn.) High School. Donald D. Holt, below, thinks the program has brought both the students and seniors the sense of an extended family.

Don Hamerman

to the senior citizens.

"I thought it was a great idea," says Betsy Green, a 12th grader in Sister Logan's class. "My grandmother was an English teacher, and I thought she would get a kick out of something like this."

Dispelling Stereotypes

Thus far, about 20 senior citizens have taken the school system up on its invitation. Some come as many as four days a week, negotiating the school's crowded parking lot and rotating class schedules to attend the 40-minute sessions. And, while some have dropped out of classes for health reasons or because the sessions took up too much time, others, such as Sister Logan, have taken classes every semester.

Teachers at the school say Sister Logan, a retired nun who taught in Catholic schools for 50 years, comes almost daily, showing up early for class and leaving her cane by the door.

"I wanted to keep my mind sharp, and I wanted the feeling of the classroom again," Sister Logan says. "I'm enjoying it to the nth degree."

Everyone involved in the program says the experience has helped to dispel stereotypes. Some students have told their teachers they were surprised to find that the seniors, whom they may have thought of only as cantankerous and out of step, know so much.

"A lot of these kids have grandparents who live far away or [whom] they rarely see," Ms. Rost says. "It's been a normalizing experience to see aging as a natural part of life."

And senior citizens come away impressed with the quality of the teaching in the schools, the amount of work the students are required to do, and the students' behavior. Even though some of the students dress in deliberately torn clothes, shave half their heads, and listen to loud music, the students appear to be responsible, the seniors have found.

"Without intruding on their lives, I felt quite warm about it," said Dr. John Pool, a retired cancer surgeon who took a drawing course at the high school.

Moreover, teachers and students say having the seniors in the class has enriched class discussions.

"Instead of two levels of experience in the class, there are three," Ms. Henry says. In a classroom discussion on Macbeth's precipitous nature, for example, Ms. Henry recalls, one of the seniors in the class noted that the life expectancy in Elizabethan times was much shorter.

"Maybe he was going for the gusto while he could," the older student remarked.

It was a perspective, Ms. Henry says, that she would not have otherwise encountered.

"It keeps you honest," Ms. Ecke says. "I find myself in talking about periods of American history, looking to her [Sister Logan] for confirmation."

The program has had little effect, however, on school-budget elections. This spring, the school system's $28-million budget was approved by one of the narrowest margins in recent memory.

"Eight people aren't going to turn an election," Mr. Holt says."You start out with one thing in mind and discover there are so many other good things that can happen." ■

Chile or Puerto Rico or Southeast Asia.

And so there are an awful lot of things that we need to understand, and there is not an awful lot of contemporary teaching material to deal with that stuff.

The teachers don't know it either. The teachers, I think, are also being let down by our educational system.

Q. In terms of not having the materials out there?

A. Exactly. The thing is, whatever happened to geography? There isn't any geography any more. It's all part of other cultures or social studies or some other kind of thing.

In order to try to make our education more efficient, we have streamlined it to the point where it just goes right through people and doesn't stick.

Q. What impact does this lack of understanding of global issues have outside of classrooms?

A. Well, I think, for instance, it makes a public that is much more easy to lead into war. My personal feeling is that I'm not sure if the Gulf war had to happen. I don't think peace was given a chance.

I think there is a situation where the more ignorant you are, the more you fear the foreigner. And the more you fear the foreigner, the more prepared you are to believe the worst of the foreigner, and the more willing you are to kill him.

It's a lot easier to kill a person you don't know than a person you do know.

Q. How do you think most students view the subjects of current events and geography?

A. You can lead a kid to current events, but you can't make him think. I think that most of them approach current events with the same groan that they approach algebra.

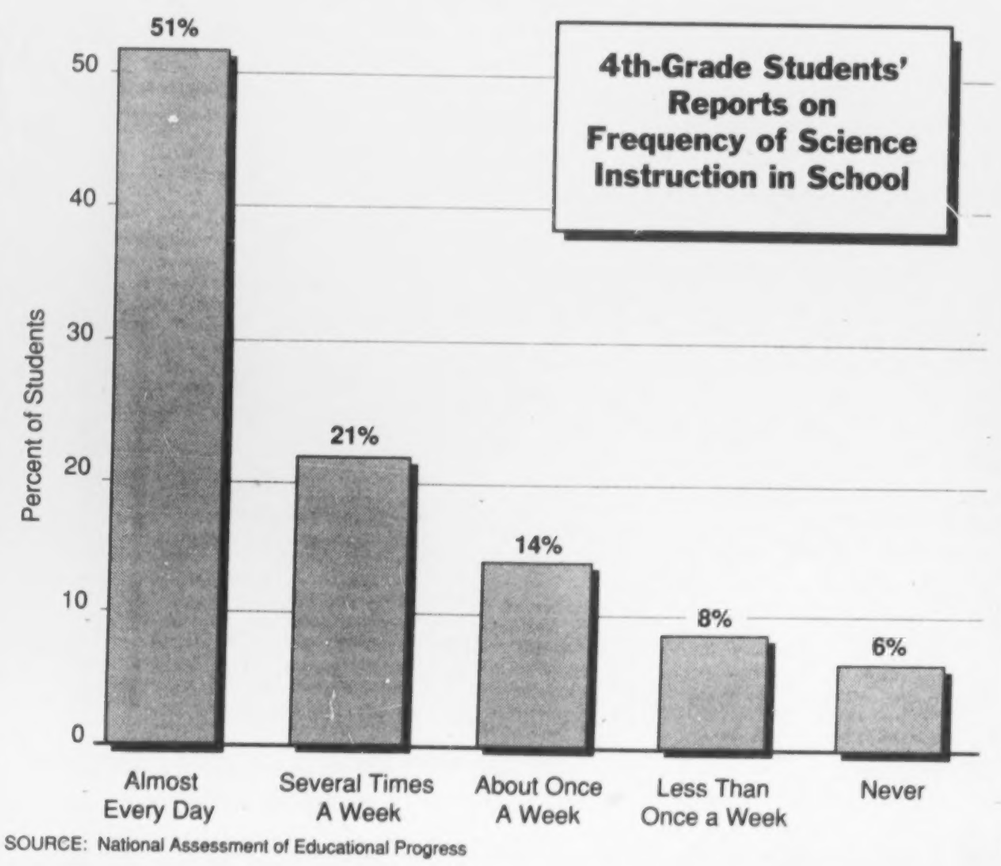
There you have the situation where the quality of the teacher comes in. A good teacher can make algebra fun. A good teacher can make current events really interesting.

I think a lot of social-studies teachers may be afraid of good current-events material because it may give the students questions to ask that they can't answer.

I'm sure there are a lot of teachers who are not quite sure they want to put this stuff in the hands of their students, because they're going to get asked questions about Muslim fundamentalism that they're not going to be able to answer. And I want to give the teachers the answers, as well as the students. ■

DIMENSIONS

Elementary Science Instruction



SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress